



stanislaus CONNECTIONS

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Mentally Ill: Modesto's Tragedy is a Nation's Tragedy

By **ERIC CAINE, The Valley Citizen**
In Memoriam

Modesto lost a piece of its heart last month. News that Hanibal Yadegar's wife Evin had been shot in Ripon by a Stanislaus County Deputy Sheriff drove pangs of anguish deep into the core of a community that years ago learned to love the Yadegars and their downtown restaurant.

If the Gallo Theater for the Arts is Modesto's beating heart, Hanibal and Evin Yadegars' *Barkin' Dog Grill* is its heart's main artery. Long a venue for Valley artists and musicians, "The Dog" has been an especially dear friend to the region's poets, ranging from Fresno's Lee Herrick to Modesto's own laureates, Gillian Wegener and Stella Beratlis, among many others.

Evin Yadegar held a Master's Degree in Fine Arts from the University of California at San Diego and poured her talents into designing the *Barkin' Dog*. Evin's husband Hanibal routinely manages a tight bundle of roles as impresario, greeter, chef, maître-de, and gracious host for lovers of good food accented by the complementary spice of art, music, poetry, and friends.

In what amounted to an anguished cry of despair, Yadegar his wife was bipolar and suffering from a manic episode when she was shot in her car after a short chase.

"I see this all the time with the mentally ill who are homeless." He said. "We don't understand it so we kick them to the curb, and this is what happened to my wife. And she paid with her life and it did not need to happen."

Unfortunately, too many in our nation have lost the ability to empathize and will never comprehend the painful truth of Yadegar's words. Only those who've tried

and failed again and again fully realize how our tattered social safety net has become a gateway to tragedy for the mentally ill and their loved ones.

After decades of ill-founded propaganda about character, choice, and liberty, too many of us believe mental illness is a problem

Poem for Evin and Those Who Love Her

The world is cruel.

Every day, it rakes at our hearts
with talons made of time and all we love:
the knit cap, the chandelier, the murmured song,
the sound of the beloved in the kitchen.

The world isn't made for mere humans,
in our soft skins with our fragile hearts
hands full of memories and tears,
holding loss that feels far too great to bear.
What are we to make of it?

How the world is cruel and also
how the world holds such beauty:
the almond trees with their flung-loose blossoms,
the sounds of saxophone, of soccer games,
the taste of cherries, the voices of friends,
the excitement of stage lights going up
on a set for the perfect first time.

Sisters and brothers, we are together in our grief
and in this cruel and beautiful world
we bear the loss together, hold each other,
and remember Evin's wide smile and her wide love,
remember that she'd turn toward the beauty
and make it her own in her wild, sunlit way,
and make that the world we cherish,
and make that the world in which we go on.

— Gillian Wegener

for families, churches and charities rather than doctors and hospitals. When these options fail, and they most often do fail, the alternative is intervention by police officers ill-equipped for the task.

In fact, law enforcement authorities nationwide have begun coming together in attempts to educate the public they serve about the tragic consequences of criminalizing mental illness. One of the most moving testimonies comes from a former police chief, Michael Biasotti, and his wife *Barbara*, a credentialed psychologist.

Despite decades of experience in law enforcement and unusual access to resources and services, the Biasottis were unable to deal with their daughter's mental illness until she was compelled into treatment by a court order. They tell their stories in a short educational video sponsored in part by the New York Association of Chiefs of Police.

But law enforcement authorities aren't the only experts trying to rouse a nation that's become anaesthetized by the now too-common prevalence of mental illness in our news, on our streets, and in our jails. With minds crippled and hearts calloused by dogmas of denial, many of us still view mental illness as a character defect rather than as the serious medical problem it is.

"Many people thus defend the rights of homeless mentally ill persons to be 'free' to live on

the sidewalk, under a bridge, or in jail," writes Dr. E. Fuller Torrey in American Psychosis. "What they don't realize is that most such people are not 'free'; rather, their actions are dictated by their delusions and auditory hallucinations, however irrational those may be."

It's hard to imagine a more compassionate and capable man than Hanibal Yadegar, a husband, father, and success in one of the most demanding of all businesses. Yet like most everyone in his situation, Yadegar found there were no practical options available for his sick wife, even when housed and surrounded by loved ones. But even in the throes of overwhelming sorrow he was able to imagine the plight of people on the streets in the same situation. Absent court intervention, they too are treated like criminals.

Only county authorities can invoke court-ordered treatment for the mentally ill. In California, they do so by enacting Laura's Law. Without authorization from Laura's Law, families and friends can only hope their

continued page 11



**Celebrate Earth Day's
28th year in Modesto
Saturday, April 22, 2017
Visit the Modesto Peace/
Life Center's booth!
10 am - 4 pm**

INSIDE CONNECTIONS

PEACE CAMP 2
PEACE CENTER ACTIVITIES 3
PEACE ESSAY WINNER 4
WORD POWER 5

RIVERS OF BIRDS 6

STROMATOLITES 7
ISSUES 8
GATHERING OF VOICES 9
ARM CHAIR ACTIVISTS! 10

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Register for Peace Camp- June 23-35



35th Annual Peace Camp June 23, 24, and 25, 2017

Camp Peaceful Pines
near Pinecrest, California

Registration Form



Adults

\$75 before May 1; \$80 before June 5; \$85 after June 5

1. _____ 2. _____
3. _____ 4. _____

Total \$ _____

Youth (ages 4 -18) \$55 before May 1; \$60 before June 5 \$65 after June 5

1. _____ Age _____ 2. _____ Age _____
3. _____ Age _____ 4. _____ Age _____

Total \$ _____

Child (ages 3 & under FREE)

1. _____ Age _____ 2. _____ Age _____

Voluntary Donation to provide a camper scholarship = \$ _____

GRAND TOTAL = \$ _____

Make checks payable to: Modesto Peace/Life Center, P.O. Box 134, Modesto, CA 95353-0134

There is an additional \$15 fee for each person coming to camp without a pre-registration.

Address _____ City _____ Zip _____

Email _____ Phone _____

☐ I need vegetarian meals. ☐ Other dietary needs: _____

☐ I have a special need for a cabin assignment: _____

☐ I can offer a ride Friday/Saturday. ☐ I need a ride Friday/Saturday

Parent authorization for minor children

I give permission for decisions to be made in my absence about the need for medical care. I give permission for my child to be treated by a physician or hospital in case of an emergency. I understand and agree that the Modesto Peace/Life Center is not responsible for my child/children. I will not hold the Modesto Peace/Life Center, its officers or leaders liable for medical aid rendered.

Name of Parent/Legal Guardian (PRINT) _____

Signature of Parent/Legal Guardian _____ Date _____

I authorize the Modesto Peace/Life Center to photograph and/or videotape my child, and reproduce my child's photographs and videotapes for publicity and/or educational/promotional purposes related to Peace Camp.

Name of Parent/Legal Guardian (PRINT) _____

Signature of Parent/Legal Guardian _____ Date _____

Note: If adults bring children not their own, the parent/legal guardian of those children must complete and sign a separate parent authorization. Minors must be accompanied by an adult.

For camp information and scholarship availability: Call Ken Schroeder, (209) 480-4576; kschroeder70@yahoo.com

The Modesto Peace/Life Center's 35th annual Peace Camp in the Sierra takes place on June 23-25 at Camp Peaceful Pines on Clark Fork Rd. off Hwy 108. Enjoy a weekend of workshops, good food, hikes, campfires, singing, crafts, talent show, star walk, recreation, and stimulating people of all ages in a beautiful mountain setting. In this time of aggression, division and confusion, Peace Camp provides an opportunity to reaffirm values, build community and renew ourselves for the work that needs to be done. Families and individuals are welcome. *Register early for a discount.*

This year we will explore the theme of the creative arts and social consciousness. Artist and muralist **Barbara Carrasco** from Los Angeles will present a Saturday morning workshop. Barbara is a key figure in the Chicana/o art movement. (see accompanying article). Musician **Patty Castillo Davis** of Ceres will present a Saturday afternoon workshop and performance. She is a well-known regional artist who has won the Best Singer Songwriter award at the Modesto Area Music Awards (see accompanying article).

Camp Peaceful Pines on Clark Fork Road off Hwy. 108 in the Stanislaus National Forest is the venue for Peace Camp. Camp Peaceful Pines features kitchen and bathroom facilities, rustic cabins and platform tents and a cabin for those with special needs. Depending on the number of campers, cabins may be shared. Campers share in meal preparation, cleanup, and other work.

The camp fee covers program, food and lodging for the weekend. Adults are \$75 before May 1, \$80 before June 5 and \$85 after June 5. Young people 18 and under are \$55 before May 1, \$60 before June 6 and \$65 after June 6. Ages 3 and under free. Minors under 18 need to be accompanied by an adult. Partial scholarships and day rates are also available. Donations for scholarships are appreciated. The camp opens with supper at 6:00pm on Friday and closes after the morning workshop on Sunday. Directions and other information will be provided to participants before camp. Registration forms are available online at www.stanislausconnections.org and www.peacelifecenter.org

Information: Ken Schroeder, 209-480-4576, kschroeder70@yahoo.com

Peace/Life Center looking for volunteers

The Modesto Peace/Life Center needs volunteers to assist with projects, events, our radio project (radio knowledge, skills needed), fundraising, and administrative activities. No experience necessary. However, experience in social media, Word, Excel, or other special skills are desired for some volunteer positions.

We need volunteers for a few hours per week, one day or more per week, or ongoing commitment.

For information, contact our volunteer/outreach coordinators: Jocelyn Cooper, (209) 312-9413 or Susan Bower, (209) 544-3931.

Peace Camp presenter: Artist Barbara Carrasco

Los Angeles artist Barbara Carrasco will present the Saturday morning workshop at Peace Camp. Barbara's art has reflected her activism and feminism and has challenged stereotypes. She is known for creating large banners for the United Farm Workers and César Chavez. She is on the board for the Dolores Huerta Foundation and created the art print "Dolores" that is the iconic image of activist Dolores Huerta. Her works have been exhibited throughout the U.S., Europe and Latin America and have been featured in the Los Angeles Times, New York Times and Boston Globe. Her original mural sketches and drawings are repositied in the Permanent Collection of Works on Paper at the



Library of Congress, Washington D.C. Documentation of her mural work is archived in the California Murals

Collection at the Smithsonian Institution. A permanent collection of her papers has been established and archived at Stanford University Special Collections Mexican American Manuscript Collections.

In 1981 her 80 foot mural "The History of Los Angeles" generated controversy because some government officials believed it was overly critical of events in American history. The events portrayed in the mural included the internment of Japanese Americans and the Zoot Suit riots. In response to attempts to get her to alter the mural she refused because "it would be compromising the integrity of--not only my integrity as an artist but the mural, the history of L.A."

Ms Magazine said of her "Carrasco has been fearless in her visual discourse on cultural and gender identity, activism, spirituality, religion and the female body. We can rest assured that her future work will continue to prod and entertain us with its thoughtful, articulate mix of aesthetics and politics."

Musician Patty Castillo Davis to perform at Peace Camp

Singer/songwriter/musician/promoter/cantor Patty Castillo Davis will present a Saturday workshop and performance at Peace Camp. Her music has beauty and power and her selection includes songs of peace, justice and love. She was named Best Singer Songwriter at the 15th Annual Modesto Area Music Awards.



Patty describes herself as a musician who does Americana Folkish Blues who can Country Rock. Her influences range from Merle Haggard to Mariachi, Motown, Classic Rock, Tejano and Linda Ronstadt. She has

opened for Los Lonely Boys, Dwight Yoakum, Beth Hart, Kenny Wayne Shepherd, Dave Mason, and Jimmie Vaughn.

Patty shares that "I came from a family that immersed me with eclectic types of music... and nobody ever told me to get a real job. Everyone said that my music was my bliss and to follow that and my Dad said, 'You can sing Johnny Cash songs; you don't have to be a boy.'" She works as a music liturgist and says "my job allows me to sing in Portuguese, and Spanish and Latin and English and has afforded me to learn so much about people and to be part of a community." She lives in Ceres in the country surrounded by nature and animals.

MPLC Film Series and Journey for Justice Presents: Dogtown Redemption

In partnership with Journey for Justice, Merced, the Modesto Peace/Life Center will be showing *Dogtown Redemption*, a 2015 Amir Soltani film about homeless recyclable collectors who scrape by, doing the best they can everyday.

We will be showing the film on Wednesday, April 12 at 6:30 PM at our Center, 720 13th St., and we welcome everyone who is interested to attend!

Visit <http://www.dogtownredemption.com/>

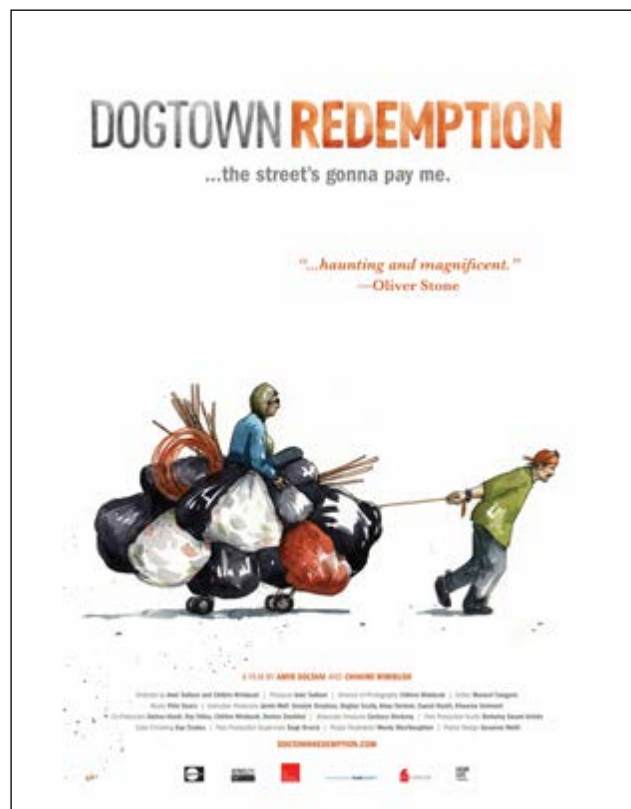
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Call 209-222-8624 to set an appointment!

Modesto Peace/Life Center
720 13th, Modesto, CA 95354



Help! "Kitchen Korner" needs kitchen items for the Homeless

By **SANDY SAMPLE**

The Peace/Life Center's Homeless Project's "Kitchen Corner" urgently needs donations of gently-used kitchen items. We're especially in need of pots and pans, serving dishes, toasters/toaster ovens and other electric food-prep items, can openers, and cooking tools of all kinds — and of course if/when we're trying to supply a large family, our supply of plates, bowls, cups, glasses, and silverware will need to be re-supplied. So the need will be ongoing, even though our storage space is limited.

Please look through your kitchen cupboards for items you don't really need that might be useful for someone who's finally able to make the transition from living on the streets

to living in an apartment or house.

Call Sandy (209) 523-8445, Shelly (209) 521-6304, or Frank (209) 556-2376, to arrange a time to meet you at the Peace/Life Center to gladly receive your items and give you a receipt.

If you're fresh out of gently-used kitchen items, you can make a donation to the Peace/Life Center marked "Kitchen Korner" and we'll use it to purchase the items we most need at local thrift stores (using our Senior discounts!)

Send your donation to the Modesto Peace/Life Center, P.O. Box 134, Modesto, CA 95353-0134

Thanks for caring and wanting to be part of the effort to reduce homelessness in our communities.



Lost and Alone

Division II - 1st Place Winner
Grace Parsons
Ceres HS, Tracy Pannell, teacher

Young demoralized vagrants, runaways who shuffle across dirty alleyways in search of the basic necessary essentials to survive another cold night, they feel numb, lonely, and worthless. Because of society's indifference, it's improbable for any of these desperate adolescents to receive help, or even a bit of sympathy. They are met with suspicion, avoidance, and egregious attitudes. Homelessness is an obvious issue known to all, but rarely does one know the extent of youth homelessness. "One out of every 45 children - some 1.6 million - in the United States is homeless" (Human). It's a painful truth the nation has to face. Even more harrowing, "A New York City provider of services to homeless youth found that approximately one in four youth had been a victim of sex trafficking or had engaged in survival sex, and that 48% of those who engaged in a commercial sex activity did so because they didn't have a safe place to stay" (Trafficking). Homelessness is not caused by one particular reason, but human trafficking is one easily avoidable cause of homelessness. Year after year, fragile homeless runaways become subjected to the cruel world of human trafficking just to survive. In order to prevent this from happening, schools need to provide counselors that are trained to become aware and assist in situations where it can be helped. Homeless youth that are victims of human trafficking can easily be helped and perhaps human trafficking could be prevented entirely.

To minimize or prevent these ghastly occurrences, there are steps that must be taken together as a nation, and individually as human beings. We must inform and train our school counselors to recognize the signs of abuse or intent to run away. Even a small sign must be addressed with the utmost urgency. Another step that can easily be integrated in schools is to urge youths to reach out. Schools should give educational presentations to students and faculty, inform adolescents of the signs, and provide resources for their benefits. These small changes to our school system can save the lives of many and save many more from the trauma they could experience. This can prevent tragedies. It is prudent and vital that services be offered for previous victims of human trafficking and offer services that save the homeless who are still suffering from its tortures. The healing process of victims would increase at a faster rate if they were around people who understand what they've been through. The main participant in this plan for salvation are the schools of the United States and services like Covenant House. Individually, as a student, one would take

every opportunity to educate ill-informed peers and volunteer in shelters nearby. With these steps implemented, over time the victims of human trafficking will decrease along with the entirety of youth homelessness, all one must do is enact it. It seems like a stretch; some might even ask *wouldn't human trafficking be an effect of homelessness?* The answer is yes. Human trafficking is an effect and cause of homelessness.

Homelessness causes youth to turn towards human trafficking, but it can also be used vice-versa. There is a line between runaways and the homeless, and when a truant runaway gets caught up in a human trafficking ring, there is no going home. "Approximately 1.7 million youth run away or are forced to leave their homes each year. While away from home, an estimated 38,600 (2.2%) of these youth were sexually assaulted." (Human) Some might even believe that there is no point in assisting someone who plans to run away because there is no changing their mind. This is small, ignorant thinking. Everyone can be helped, and everyone can be saved.

Eradication of the homeless youth is achievable. With the participation of an entire nation, ending this crisis has never been more possible. It will be the end of starving vagrants. It will be the end of freezing vagabonds. It will be the end of this dark era our nation has faced. Together we can fight alongside human trafficking victims, and ally with organizations that provide for them. Innocence that has been corrupted will be avenged, sympathy will be given with compassion, justice will be fought for with bravery, and knowledge will prevent this tragedy from repeating itself again in a vicious circle. A sense of home is the knowledge that one belongs to somewhere. Having a bed to sleep, food to eat, a place to study, and a home in which to live is something everyone should have the right to. With this plan to diminish youth homelessness, the tensions of the victims will be soothed and the anxieties of the country will dissipate to create a truly tranquil home for all.

Works Cited:

"Human Trafficking." "Covenant House. October 20, 2016; <https://www.covenanthouse.org/homeless-teen-issues/human-trafficking>

"Human Trafficking and the Runaway and Homeless Youth Population." The National Network for Youth. October 22, 2016: <https://www.1800runaway.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/Homeless-Youth-and-Human-Trafficking.pdf>



Watch the 30th Annual Peace
Essay Contest Awards Ceremony at
<https://vimeo.com/209646879>

Video by John Lucas

Holiday Gift Bags for Women's Prison

Thank you for all you do for us. Some of us do not have family who care and support us. Your presents are the only presents most of us receive. Thank you. --CookieThe Inmate Family Council at the Central California Women's Facility in Chowchilla continues to distribute gift bags to more than 2900 inmates during the winter holiday season. This requires an ongoing, year-round effort on the part of many caring individuals and organizations throughout the local area to collect appropriate items.

You, too, can help by collecting travel/sample sizes of the following: soap, shampoo, conditioner, skin/body lotion, toothpaste and tissue. There's also a need for adult size toothbrushes (individually wrapped), full size wood pencils with erasers and unused greeting cards with envelopes. Donated items may be brought to the Modesto Peace/Life Center office (call ahead to make sure the office is open or call the numbers), 720 13th St., Modesto.

ACTION: For information, contact Shelly Scribner, (521-6304) or Dave Hetland, (388-1608).

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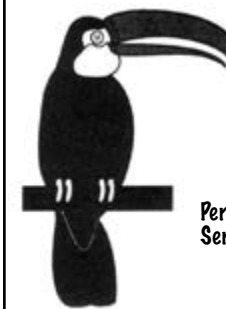
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Green Tips for a Green Planet: Earth Day reminds us to live green one person at a Time

By TINA ARNOPOLE DRISKILL

April 22 “marks the 41st anniversary of the first Earth Day, started to boost awareness about the environment — and to ensure that pro-planet types would no longer be ignored by legislators,” according to *Good Housekeeping Magazine*, which “has given ‘green’ advice since the magazine started in 1885, when “frequently the impetus was thrift.”

This year we face much push back from legislators countrywide on climate change and green policies, ultimately laying the responsibility squarely upon individuals to organize and speak out in support of environmental protections.

What remains constant is the choice to live green at home, at work and everywhere one can make a positive conservationist footprint. Good Housekeeping takes readers back to the future with “five blasts from our past, updated for the 21st century.”

1. APRIL 1903

THEN: “All women should have personal knowledge of the sources of the home’s supplies. It is not necessary to go every day to one’s butcher’s and grocer’s, but an acquaintance with the tradesmen themselves is a necessity to good living.”

NOW: Just plug in your zip code at eatwellguide.org to find nearby suppliers of organic and sustainably produced foods.

2. APRIL 1943

THEN: “Foods do not cook faster when they boil violently. If you turn down heat when boiling begins, you’ll use less fuel, and foods won’t boil over or burn dry.”

NOW: The advice still makes sense — as does matching the pan size to the burner element. A six-inch pan on an eight-inch electric burner, for instance, will waste more than 40 percent of the heat produced, *and* food will take longer to cook.

3. MARCH 1944

THEN: “Grease from fingers or food is bad for your refrigerator door’s rubber gasket. Wash it with soap and water. Don’t make [your freezer] work overtime by making more ice cubes than needed.”

NOW: These days there’s a good chance your icemaker shuts off automatically. And more important than cleaning the gasket: dusting the coils underneath or on the back side of the fridge (accumulated dust can cause the motor to overheat and cost more to run). Unplug the appliance, and use your vacuum’s crevice attachment or flat long-handled brush to carefully remove dust.

4. APRIL 1970

THEN: “Daily cooking produces grease, smoke, and odors that can cause eye and nose irritation. To remove cooking pollutants, a ceiling or a wall exhaust fan and two types of range hoods — vented and ventless — are available.”

NOW: Still good advice, with one caveat: Choose a hood that vents to the outside, if you can.

5. JUNE 1979

THEN: “Combine your separate errands — bank, grocery, drugstore, cleaner’s, etc. — into one trip and form carpools with others to get to and from.”

NOW: True today — whether it’s to cut fuel costs or to shrink your carbon footprint.

Birding Double Feature at the State Theatre

Sunday April 23: Join hundreds of fellow birders, wildlife enthusiasts, nature lovers and environmentalists for a special two-film birding event also featuring the Sierra Club, the Stanislaus Audubon Society, the Great Valley Museum and the Stanislaus Wildlife Refuge. You’ll also find out where the top spots are for locating a plentitude of birds and wildlife, all in your own backyard.

My Big Year (G) 50 Min. Educator, photographer and birder Jim Gain, inspired by the movie *The Big Year*, decided to see how many different bird species he could photograph over four seasons in 2016. His breathtaking film, shot in Merced and Stanislaus counties, beautifully captures thousands of wild birds and their habitats.

The Big Year (PG-2011) 1 Hr. 40 Min. Three disparate men (Steve Martin, Jack Black and Owen Wilson) try to outdo each other in the ultimate bird-watching competition in 1998, the year El Nino brought an unprecedented special to North America. Their quest takes them on an unforgettable trek throughout North America.

Doors at 1 p.m.; *My Big Year* at 2 p.m.; *The Big Year* at 3 p.m. Admission: \$10

<http://www.thestate.org/calendar/event/853#>



Help the Haven: “Walk a Mile in Her Shoes”

By KATHLEEN ROWE-GLENDON

On Saturday, April 29, 2017, Haven will host its fourth annual “Walk a Mile in Her Shoes” event/fundraiser in downtown Modesto at Gallo Center for the Arts. Registration form and information can be found at www.havenwalkamile.org or by calling Haven directly at (209) 524-4331.

According to Chris Rock, women need “need food, water, and compliments. And an occasional pair of shoes.” I firmly believe in the transformative power of a great pair of shoes. Haven’s Walk A Mile event takes that one step further in that it embraces that old adage that you cannot truly know people until you have “walked a mile” in their shoes. In years past, men solely have walked in this fundraising event wearing red high heeled shoes to raise money to assist Haven in its efforts to eradicate intimate partner violence by assisting victims of domestic violence, sexual assault and human trafficking.

Funds from this annual event have enabled Haven to assist 3,000 clients this past year alone. This year, for the first time, woman will be able to sign up to walk, either individually or in teams. However, only male registrants will be provided with red shoes as a symbolic method of bringing up awareness around Haven’s mission as a catalyst for individual empowerment and societal change that advocates for those who are impacted by domestic violence, sexual abuse and exploitation, and its goal to end gender-based violence.

Haven’s target is raise a minimum of \$75,000 from this event. Established in 1977, Haven offers services to those suffering domestic violence, those who have been prostituted or used by sex traffickers, trans-women and men and abused immigrants and children who have been impacted by violence in their homes. Funds from this event are desperately needed so that Haven can continue to provide support and resources for its clients and their families.

Please go to their website at www.havenwalkamile.org or by calling Haven directly, and ask for Cristal or Denise at (209) 524-4331 to register, donate or get further information.



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Rivers of Birds, Forests of Tules: Central Valley Nature and Culture in Season

By LILLIAN VALLEE

78: "The Largest Days"

For over two decades I have often left Modesto on a Saturday morning to venture south on Highway 99 to the Lander Avenue Exit, have driven past the small town of Hilmar, over the Merced River, and through rural Stevinson into the heart of the largest contiguous wetland in our region, the San Luis National Wildlife Refuge Complex, celebrating fifty years of existence this past February.

Usually I was there to meet Modesto Junior College students volunteering their time to revegetate various refuge sites by planting cottonwood, willow, and wild rose cuttings or salt grass and alkali sacaton plugs, but on this anniversary day, U.S. Fish and Wildlife staff Madeline Yancey and Jack Sparks told visitors how the refuge (one of 560 refuges nationwide, concentrated along the migratory flyways in response to the Migratory Bird Conservation Act of 1918) began with 7,360 acres, marked by the San Joaquin River to the east and Salt Slough to the west. Thanks to the sustained efforts of U.S. Fish & Wildlife leaders and staff, as well as the communities and organizations supporting them, the Complex today includes three refuges—San Joaquin River (7,000 acres) in Stanislaus County, and San Luis (26,800 acres) and Merced (10,200 acres) in Merced County; encompasses the major Central Valley habitats—freshwater wetlands, native grasslands, riparian forests, and croplands; and has acquired perpetual conservation easements on over 80,000 acres of privately owned wetlands and uplands of the 150,000 acres in the Grasslands Wildlife Management Area. This beautiful segment of Central Valley open space hosts three hundred species of birds as well as thriving herds of tule elk and mule deer.

Madeline talked about the area's history which included Henry Miller and Charles Lux's 50,000-acre Rancho Santa Rita and the presence of gray wolves, grizzly bears, and pronghorn during the tenure of the Yokuts and Miwok peoples. She described the "marsh-pocked valley" and its islands—San Luis, Turner, Teal—which nourished sixty million migrating wildfowl (reduced to 6.5 million by the 1990's). People would boat to the islands to hunt stranded squirrels, rabbits, bobcats, and coyotes. Henry Miller regarded San Luis as the finest grassland in the entire San Joaquin Valley.

Earlier that morning I had turned left from 165 onto Wolfson Road, past the oldest building in Merced County—the San Luis Camp Adobe and eastern outpost of the nineteenth century San Luis Gonzaga Ranch. On Wolfson Road, visitors to the San Luis NWR are almost always greeted by the refuge's welcoming committee—a kestrel, a family of sandhill cranes, spiral of freshwater pelicans or an iridescent kingfisher—even before they get to the LEED* Platinum certified building housing the relatively new and thoughtfully planned San Luis National Wildlife Refuge Complex Headquarters and Visitor Center.

On the bridge leading to the Visitor Center are words from John Muir who came this way when headed to the mountains. Never were his eyes more thronged with beauty, he wrote, about the wildflower displays in the grasslands, and he called those days, the "largest" of his life. I have been thinking a lot about how days become large, and certainly the richness and diversity of plant and animal species have something to do with this quickening, but the other thing I remember from the many "large" hours spent with U.S. Fish & Wildlife staff and students and their families who came to help was a rare generosity of spirit shared by all who worked for the benefit of so many species.

That generosity began with Project Leader Gary Zahm, who invited the community to participate in meetings and always made time to explain the workings of the refuge. Fish & Wildlife staff would often cook for the volunteers doing restoration work: Senior Biologist Dennis Woolington once made an enormous cauldron of a terrific blue goose gumbo eaten up so quickly there was none left for him, but he never complained. Karine Sande always remembered to bring sour cream and onion potato chips, a favorite snack which never seemed to taste as good anywhere else. Sometimes, after the work was done, staff would take us on tours to places normally closed to regular visitors—egret and heron rookeries, for example, which astounded with their multi-generational, multiplex nesting architecture. These good people understood that sustaining the Pacific Flyway, "tattered and frayed," in the words of Robert Wilson, "will require more generosity than we have offered in the past. Having claimed the habitat of migratory birds to build our farms and cities, it is time to give some of that space back." And that is exactly what the Fish & Wildlife teams work to do, with tremendous daily devotion and for minimal material gain.

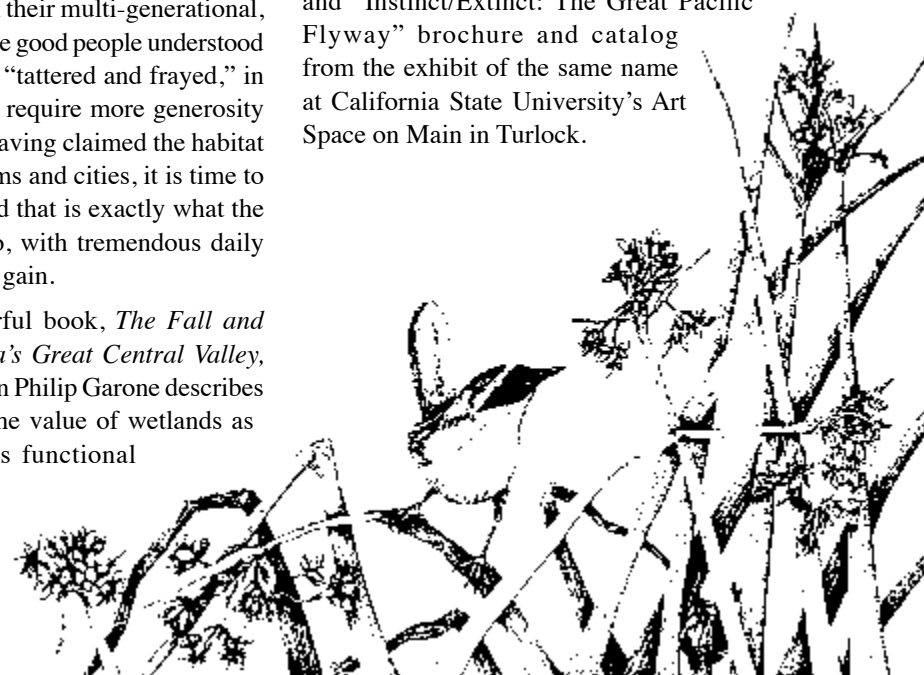
In his illuminating and masterful book, *The Fall and Rise of the Wetlands of California's Great Central Valley*, California State University historian Philip Garone describes how a broader understanding of the value of wetlands as not just waterfowl habitat but as functional ecosystems that provide "flood mitigation, storm abatement, aquifer recharge, improvement of water quality, nutrient recycling, aquatic productivity and aesthetic and recreational op-

portunities (including birdwatching, hunting, and fishing) and opportunities for education and scientific research" led to greater appreciation and drive to preserve.

There is no better way to honor the fiftieth anniversary of the San Luis National Wildlife Refuge Complex than to take time to read Garone's book, and to support further Fish & Wildlife Service efforts to enhance wetlands shadowing the Great Pacific Flyway, specifically the plan to expand the San Joaquin River NWR boundaries. "Bird migration is the one truly unifying natural phenomenon in the world," writes Scott Weidensaul, "stitching the continents together in a way that even the great weather systems...fail to do." And it is not just the continents that the birds stitch together but people as well with some wild core in themselves, evoking a stirring, inexplicable largesse.

***Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design** (LEED) certification indicates a building that meets high standards for "energy conservation, renewable energy production, water efficiency, use of recycled materials, and indoor environmental quality and control." Platinum certification is the highest possible rating.

Sources: Philip Garone, *The Fall and Rise of the Wetlands of California's Great Central Valley*; and "Instinct/Extinct: The Great Pacific Flyway" brochure and catalog from the exhibit of the same name at California State University's Art Space on Main in Turlock.



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Stromatolites: Pillars of Time

By LYNN HANSEN

Professor of Biology Emeritus, Modesto Junior College

It is a tradition for our family to journey to places where deep time is preserved, where we can envision evidence of Earth's formation and history. Like curious geologists, paleontologists, anthropologists and biologists, we too delight in seeing for ourselves physical evidence that allows us to piece together the vast timeline of events of Earth's changes, its early life forms and even our own origins – a daunting task.

We have visited several sites on Earth where scientists have been able to visualize early Earth and its inhabitants. Olduvai Gorge in the Rift Valley of East Africa is where Louis Leakey's discovery of early humans gave impetus to an understanding of human lineages and relationships to anthropoid apes. The Grand Canyon in the US, relentlessly eroded by aquatic forces of the Colorado River, reveals layers of time from recent to the Pre-Cambrian 2,000 million-year-old Vishnu Shist and Zoroaster Granite. Our river trip descended through the canyon, traveling through layers of landscape time, revealing to us fossils of sea lilies, trilobites, brachiopods, fish, mollusks and stromatolites, relics of ancient Earth's life forms. The oldest stromatolite fossil, 3.8-billion-years old, is located in the Isua Greenstone Belt in Greenland but when we learned that living specimens of this ancient life form, descendants from Pre-Cambrian life, exist still in Western Australia, our appetite for adventure was peaked. Off we went to the World Heritage Site of Hamelin Bay, north of Perth-one of the few places on Earth where living stromatolites thrive and offer a unique time travel opportunity.

Stromatolites are hard columns or mounds formed by a community of microorganisms knitting together surrounding sediment. The pioneers in this process are filamentous cyanobacteria, also called blue-green algae that secrete a mucus film that traps sediments. Following their effort, a second group of bacteria whose role is decomposition of organic material grows over the first layer, again forming a slimy mucilaginous sheet over the others. A layer of sulfur-reducing bacteria then settles on the growing community, creating crystals of calcium carbonate known as aragonite that forms a thin crust on its surface. The last layer to arrive is composed of coccoid or spherical shaped cyanobacteria that burrow into the crust, forming a lattice-like reinforcement to the stromatolite structure. Growth is slow, estimated to be about 0.4mm per year. Over time, layers and layers of growth stack up into different forms depending on how much tidal exposure they experience. In the shallow Hamelin Pool living organisms thrive on the outer layers of the column that is bathed in seawater.

In Hamelin Pool, stromatolites survive in remote colonies where the water is rich in calcium carbonate, nutrient poor, may or may not be hyper-saline, contain few grazing predators and the weather is warm. Hamelin Pool has very little circulation from the surrounding Indian Ocean that enters Shark Bay near Monkey Mia to the north, so these pools are isolated and quiet.

Startling to most, is that these small creatures, the cyanobacteria, presented early Earth with its first example of



chemical warfare. Early Earth's atmosphere lacked molecular, or free oxygen, but was composed mainly of carbon dioxide, nitrogen, methane, ammonia, and water vapor among other gases. Only anaerobic organisms could thrive in such an environment until along came the cyanobacteria. Their arrival changed everything.

Cyanobacteria, including those in the community forming stromatolites, were the first forms of life to carry on a process of making their own food, called photosynthesis. These organisms took the raw materials of carbon dioxide and water and in the presence of sunlight harvest that energy to build food molecules, simple sugars. It was the waste product of this process, molecular oxygen, which proved to be the change agent. Oxygen is a powerful oxidizing agent, and can release lots of energy when reacting with other chemicals. Oxidation can also destroy organisms that cannot use molecular oxygen so as more and more stromatolites thrived globally, gradually the oxygen concentration accumulated to a toxic level for the anaerobic life present at that time. Cyanobacteria effectively caused extinction of existing anaerobic inhabitants of early Earth. It was the first Great Extinction Event.

Evidence of this oxygen revolution can be seen in many places in the world including Western Australia in the Fortescue Group of the Pilbara region near Shay Gap where the oldest fossils in this area are 3,200 million-years-old. Here banded iron beds or layers show that in times before the onset of the oxygen revolution, the iron in the area was in the reduced or ferrous state forming bands of dark black. As the concentration of oxygen evolution increased, ferrous iron was oxidized into ferric iron precipitating out bands of reddish color known as red beds. Such strata can be radiometrically dated, comparing radioactive isotopes in the material with their decay products in the same material, and give us a time frame or geochronology when the oxygen revolution occurred.

Because of the uniqueness of living stromatolites found in Hamelin Pool at the tip of Shark Bay, they became a goal for my family to fulfill a bucket list of *must see* destinations. To get there, one must fly to Perth and either rent a car or engage a tour group that has a stop at Hamelin Pool as part of its itinerary. We chose the latter, indicating to the tour hostess that



the stromatolites were *the reason* we booked the trip. While most of our fellow travelers were Australians, they had never heard of stromatolites, so we took the opportunity to educate. For days we talked about their structure, the fact that they initiated the oxygen revolution, killed off most of the anaerobes and prepared a way for us oxygen-breathers to survive. Like most people whose country contains a National Heritage Site, our Australian comrades were eager to see something that would compel us to travel half-way-around the world from the US to visit. They were not disappointed.

When we arrived, at Hamelin Pool it was low tide. As we made our way out on the wooden walkway built over the water, a large assembly of black pillars stood at attention, partially submerged in aquamarine salty water and surrounded by warm October sunshine greeted us. There they were, the stromatolites, revered by Aboriginal peoples of the area as ancestors and life giving. The region around the pool was desert-like while a few White-necked Cormorants stood on the tops of the stromatolites, preening at water's edge. What might have seemed like dull black rocks to the unprepared visitor, became a source of pride for our Australian traveling companions who saw evidence that their country was home to a remnant population and protected treasure from the ancient world. For us, they opened our window into the past, as pillars of time.

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The Great American Tradition of Immigration

By BRUCE E. JONES

Of all the Trump-generated issues the one that evokes the greatest anger, at least for me, is immigration. The present debate over borders and all forms of immigration masks the fact that it addresses *immigrants*. That is to say, actual living people with families and hopes, who chose to come to America for its freedom, economic opportunity, security, and religious choice.

The most extreme anti-immigrants insist that a flood of “others” will change the essence of America and turn it into a third-world nation. But that’s an old, tired story. Consider this from a book by Gaillard Hunt entitled *Life in America One Hundred Years Ago* (with my emphasis):

“The immigrant came to stay. His dominating desire was to merge himself in American life. He obtained American citizenship as soon as the law allowed him to do so. He imbibed American institutions and forgot the institutions he had left behind him. He learned our language and often failed to teach his children his own mother tongue. There was always a fear that the immigrant would interfere with the normal development of American life, but in reality he became more American than the natives themselves.”

The book was published in 1914 and was quoted in the *Collier’s* magazine of August 11, 1917, even as a terrible world war was producing millions of refugees searching for help. Some would become American citizens. That tradition was illustrated at the 2016 Democratic convention by the persons of Khizar and Ghazala Khan, born in Pakistan, becoming American citizens and the Gold Star parents of US Army Captain Humayun Khan, who died in Iraq. This is a family that has not only read the U.S. Constitution, as demonstrated by Mr. Khan at the conference, but has *lived* it.

Certainly, all new-comers, workers, and visitors can be vetted more effectively at the gates (note: There is nothing in government that can’t be improved). But it must be the citizenry that welcomes them to the American Dream. Meanwhile, undocumented workers must be recognized as vital to many regional economies across the nation, especially agricultural areas like the Central Valley. Surely these workers and their families—especially the DREAMers—can be vetted, licensed and tracked through an improved work permit program.

We are as a nation blessed and strengthened by a diversity of religions, philosophies, opinions, races, cultures, skills. Our starting point in the quest for balanced immigration, guest worker, and refugee assistance programs must be to *respect* those who left their nations of birth with dreams of become part of “We The People.”

Those of us “natural born” Americans, so comfortable in our liberal or conservative refuges, need to reach out to newcomers from all corners of the world and to study with them the meanings of national pride and civic responsibility.

Contact: The *Let America Be* Project, 213/613-5074 or brucejones424@msn.com

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What about the SSS?

By ELIZABETH BURNS

“MEN 18 through 25 REGISTER—It’s Quick - It’s Easy - It’s The Law.” The new Selective Service System (SSS) folder in the Post Office makes it clear. You’d think it would be simple, that everyone would know about it, everyone would do it, but that’s not the case, as I learned asking around.

Who has to register? “Male U.S citizens and immigrants, documented and undocumented, residing in the U.S and its territories,” supposedly within 30 days of one’s 18th birthday. If you do, you get an SSS Acknowledgment and Number to keep in a safe place, and you update your info if you move. See www.sss.gov

BUT WHAT IF YOU DON’T? The folder explains: “Not registering is a FELONY (caps mine). Young men prosecuted and convicted of failure to register may be fined up to \$250,000, imprisoned for up to five years, or both.” It goes on that you may also permanently lose eligibility for student financial aid, government employment, job training, and U.S citizenship.

A local high school counselor assured me that senior boys all get the message in their government class (17-18 year olds), and if they apply for a federal Pell Grant, they are automatically enrolled. Some say high schools send in graduates’ info, others say the DMV does it. When I asked a couple of top-notch graduates, they didn’t even know what I was talking about, let alone be registered. “But anyway,” the counselor added, “they don’t enforce the law.” Others have said this too. So we all just shine it on?

Maybe you thought the Draft ended in 1973. It did, and we do have an all-volunteer military since then, but in 1980 President Carter reinstated Registration with the SSS as a back-up measure “in case of a national emergency, determined by Congress and the President, which would require rapid expansion of the Armed Forces.” (SSS folder)

Our new president has repeatedly mentioned his desire to expand the military, and one of his first edicts capped all fed-



eral hiring “except for military.” Seeing as Congress and the president are acting together a lot these days, rapid military expansion is not a far reach.

In the past, various churches and peace organizations offered Draft Counseling, but most dropped it after 1973. It may be time to dust off the files, remember how to construct a Conscientious Objector record, be ready in case this sleeping dog wakes.

Start here for general information: <http://rcnv.org/programs/mil/>

The three historic peace churches offer guidance for those who wish to claim Conscientious Objector status:

The Church of the Brethren: <http://www.brethren.org/CO/curriculum.html>

The Society of Friends (Quakers): <http://ithacamonthly-meeting.org/resources/conscientious-objection-information/> and <https://www.afsc.org/search/node/selective%20service>

The Mennonites: <http://thirdway.com/prepare-for-peace/history/conscientious-objection-2/>



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Here Then Is a Map of the Continents

Here then is a map of the continents
here are the men here are the women
here are the trees
It will never be different than it is now

The men take core samples from the trees
they leave with mud on their shoes
a pound of flesh in their bags
they wish to be the first to drill the moon

I want you to choose the season and the place

In the lineup he selects his whores for their faces
for the rest of the night he drools on their backs
Often I am pinned to the corners of rooms
observing the procession We
describe this as cyclical, inevitable

Here is the progress of Man
Here is his will to exist
he is always at odds with Nature

We are making a science of rain patterns
on the window. We take out rulers
measure the widths the shapes
we predict the future
we scrape samples into crisp leather cases
we hope one day to find a reproduction
to reduce our reliance on the uncertainty of sky

On the foreheads of passengers on the train:
Question marks

I swear there is some truth inside me like a piece of
metal lodged in my gut. I wish my
hand a razor.

I seek a loftier use for words

California Kiev February 20114

Tonight a young man or woman
puts on her coat, bright
and orange. She prepares.
It is her last night.

My arm the axis on which the earth tilts
I spin
I do not know which way is up.

Tonight I will go to sleep, I will love or hate the arm beside
me
I will worry about the laundry
I cannot prepare the young man or woman
in her bright orange coat I cannot stroke her hair or hold
her head in my hands
I am guilty.

There are a million stories there is only one story
a calf hangs in a barn
While I fell through the floor my sister read a novel
my mother watched the news
Even I was not there.
My heart cannot be stone and melting at once.

It is a high price to pay she says. I
cannot tolerate. Once
by the Black Sea she found a jellyfish her mother
told her it would sting she felt pride in her chest like a
balloon
She swirled under the sun she throws her petrol bomb into
the barricade
like the fish to the sea she has no rage but pride, hope like a
balloon. She grasps the hole in her ear the hole in her eye
inexperienced hands around her chest It is a high price to
pay she says
I will not forgive.

In Your Country

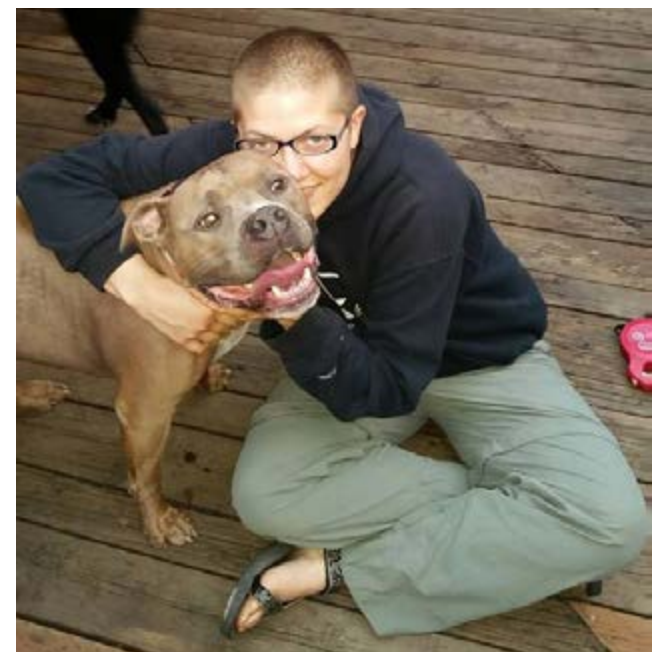
There are stories about your country
you do not tell

Like when you were a child and you held
clumps of soil in your hands
layers of textured scents

Your father told you break the earth
with your shovel you asked
what about the worms
Circle of life he told you but when
your mother died
he wept bitterly and you wondered what
was the difference between a worm
and your mother.

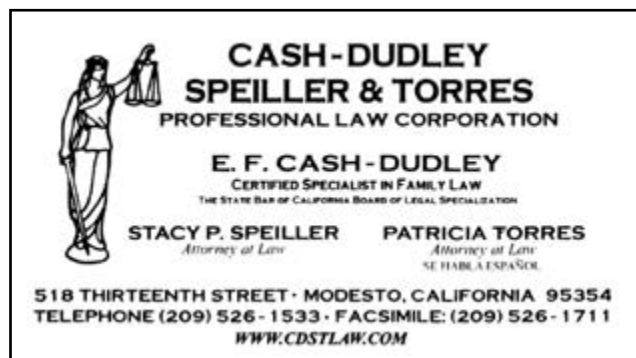
The Spider and the Trees

The spider spins her web between two dogwoods
Sometimes the rain sends it dragging in tatters
against the trunks, sometimes
the wind. She rebuilds. The complete arch
of her life in the center
of those trees, no greater
Country Beyond, no
further unknowns. She has seen
every midnight in that space
and so has memorized textures of light, tremulous
changes in air. She can taste when the moonlight
climaxes in soft daring circles,
nothing between them - two old women
naked on the beach between what they know
and what they do not care to learn. Their toes turn to sand.
And I wonder why I try within my inches
to expand my arm of knowledge, lengthen
my sphere of influence
though I know none of the world
the way the spider knows her two twigs and her moon.



POET: Dimitra Gideon

Dmitra Gideon is a Student Assistance Specialist at
Hanshaw Middle School. Her favorite activity is listening,
and she is particularly passionate about ecofeminism and sex
workers' rights. Some of her best friends are trees.



Attention: armchair activists!

By VASU MURTY

In his 1987 booklet, *The New Abolitionists*, B.R. Boyd writes: “Seventy to one hundred million, including lost and abandoned pets, are quite literally injected, infected, mutilated, driven insane, strapped immobile for years on end, blinded, concussed, burned, mechanically raped, dismembered, disemboweled, mutilated, and otherwise violated—often without adequate anesthesia—in order to test shampoos, oven cleaners, make-up, and scientific hypotheses; to advance medical science or personal careers; to develop and test nuclear, biological, chemical, and conventional weapons; or for general scientific curiosity, and because public funding is available.

“Twenty million unwanted companion animals undergo

Our food system – from farm to table – is dominated by large corporations whose main aim is not to keep us healthy; it is to make profits.

euthanasia every year and countless others are abused by their guardians. Spay-neuter clinics get little or no public funding, while the pet-breeding industry continues to enrich itself by pumping out living, disposable toys. Seventeen million wild fur-bearing animals (and twice as many ‘trash’ animals) are mangled in steel jaw traps and seventeen million more factory farmed, then gassed or electrocuted, that we may wear furs. 170 million animals are hunted down and shot to death in their habitats, mostly for sport, often leaving their offspring to die of exposure or starvation.

“Industrial pollution, habitat destruction, and our transportation system kill and maim untold millions, while we kidnap and imprison others for our entertainment in zoos. Ten billion land animals and trillions of aquatic animals are killed in the United States every year; 95 percent of them are killed for food. We force-breed, cage, brand, castrate, and over-milk them, cut off their beaks, horns, and tails, pump them full of antibiotics and growth stimulants, steal their eggs, and kill and eat them.”

Animal activists are the new abolitionists. There are many reasons for a plant-based diet. Our food system -- from farm to table -- is dominated by large corporations whose main aim is not to keep us healthy; it is to make profits. Promoting meat, dairy and highly processed food is dangerous for your health and dangerous for our planet, but great for corporate profits. The book, *Rethinking Food*, features more than one hundred doctors citing scientific studies proving that a plant-based diet (fruits, vegetables, whole grains, legumes) is best for human health. They also present abundant evidence that eating animal products is the cause of many of our most prevalent and dangerous diseases.

“Isn’t man an amazing animal? He kills wildlife - birds, kangaroos, deer, all kinds of cats, coyotes, beavers, ground-hogs, mice, foxes and dingos - by the million in order to

protect his domestic animals and their feed. Then he kills domestic animals by the billion and eats them. This in turn kills man by the millions, because eating animals leads to degenerative - and fatal - health conditions like heart disease, kidney disease, and cancer. So then man tortures and kills millions more animals to look for cures for these diseases. Elsewhere, millions of other human beings are being killed by hunger and malnutrition because food they could eat is being used to fatten domestic animals. Meanwhile, some people are dying of sad laughter at the absurdity of man, who kills so easily and so violently, and once a year, sends out cards praying for Peace on Earth.” --David Coats

The meat industry abuses and kills billions of animals every year. If meat-eaters would visit one of these slaughterhouses, or just watch some of the videos available online, they would see the incredible suffering our food system imposes on these helpless animals. The meat industry has a worse impact on climate change than fossil fuel. Meat production produces huge amounts of methane (CH₄). Methane traps up to ninety times more heat than carbon dioxide (CO₂). The federal government does not regulate methane emissions. The meat, dairy, and egg industries produce 65 percent of global nitrous oxide emissions. Nitrous oxide (NO₂) is three hundred times for powerful than CO₂ at trapping heat in the earth’s atmosphere.

The diets of meat-eaters create seven times the greenhouse gases as the diets of vegans. To produce one pound of animal protein versus one pound of soy protein, it takes twelve times as much land, thirteen times as much fossil fuel, and fifteen times as much water. Cows use 85 percent of the energy from agricultural land but account for only eight percent the food we eat. Over 260 million acres of U.S. forest land has been cleared to create room to grow grain to feed farmed animals. The equivalent of seven football fields of land are bulldozed every minute to create more room for farmed animals. By not eating one pound of beef, you save more water than you would by not showering for six months. Meat industry workers suffer some of the lowest pay and most dangerous working conditions of any workers. One vegan meal can save three thousand gallons of water, sixteen pounds of grain, and possibly your life, and possibly the planet’s ability to support human existence.

The International Network for Religion and Animals was founded in 1985. Since then, numerous books have been written on animals and theology, including: *The Vegetarianism of Jesus Christ: the Pacifism, Communalism and Vegetarianism of Primitive Christianity; Food for the Spirit: Vegetarianism and the World Religions; The Souls of Animals; Replenish the Earth; Of God and Pelicans; Is God A Vegetarian?; God’s Covenant with Animals; They Shall not Hurt or Destroy*; and many others.

While humans are starving, half the world’s grain is fed to livestock! Aren’t feeding the hungry; treating the body as a temple of God which should not be defiled nor dishonored through antibiotics, hormones, pesticides, poisons and other unhealthy toxins and unhealthy food in general; the

institutionalized killing of billions of animals being directly responsible for global hunger, global warming, the energy, environmental, population and water crises; treating animals humanely, and compassionate stewardship over the environment, over all of God’s creation, all biblical issues? The editors of the Green Bible, which highlights environmentally-friendly biblical passages might think so.

Test tube meat? It’s animal protein, but it doesn’t involve violence. It doesn’t involve taking the life of a fellow creature. People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) is offering millions to anyone who can perfect lab grown meat. To me, test tube meat is science fiction. When I was in grade school in the early ‘70s, I read a science fiction book called *The Lost Race of Mars*, set in the year 2017, depicting a future in which humans have colonies on Mars. The colonists enjoy meat grown in labs and test tubes, as it’s impossible to transport livestock through space, go through the waste of resources and energy to raise animals for food (and deal with the animals’ waste!) in colonies on other worlds.

No need for test-tube meat: the imitation meat and dairy products are just as delicious! Shifting to a plant-based diet in 2017 is fact, not fiction. Vegetarian and vegan celebrities include: Russell Brand, Kristen Wiig, Natalie Portman, Pamela Anderson, Mýa, Toby McGuire, Kristen Bell, Russell Simmons, Ellen DeGeneres, Olivia Wilde, Stevie Wonder, Kellie Pickler, Alec Baldwin and many others.

An animal rights message is warmly received on the political left, not on the right. Bill Clinton, Al Gore, Dennis Kucinich, Cory Booker, Reverend Al Sharpton are vegan. Chelsea Clinton was vegan for a number of years... her wedding in 2010 was strictly vegan. Amy Carter is a vegetarian.

“Vegetarianism takes care of so many things in one shot: ecology, famine, cruelty. Let’s do it!”

And the Bush daughters were famous for... underage drinking? Well, to be fair, PETA reports that Lauren Bush, niece of George W. Bush, is a vegetarian.

Pound for pound, many vegetarian foods are better sources of protein than meat. A one-hundred-gram portion of lentils yields twenty-five grams of protein, while a hundred grams of soybeans yields thirty-four grams of protein. Although meat provides less protein, it costs more. A spot check of supermarkets in Florida in August 2005 showed sirloin steak costing \$7.87 a pound, while staple ingredients for delicious vegetarian meals averaged less than \$1.50 a pound. Becoming a vegetarian could potentially save an individual shopper at least several hundred dollars each year, thousands of dollars over the course of a lifetime. The savings to consumers

Attention:

... from page 10

as a whole would amount to billions of dollars annually. Considering all this, it's hard to see how anyone could afford *not* to become a vegetarian.

Merely shifting to a plant-based diet: a slight change in lifestyle, comparable to cellphones; going from gas guzzlers to compact cars and unleaded fuels; legalizing industrial hemp; paper Vs plastic bags; recycling; switching to decaf; switching to the metric system, etc., can save the planet. Attention: armchair activists! Through a slight change in lifestyle, we can save redwoods and rainforests, the ozone layer, and end global hunger, global warming, the energy, environmental, population and water crises... as well as end abortion and bring about world peace, too, as abortion and war are the *karma* for killing animals!

"If anyone wants to save the planet," says Paul McCartney in an interview with PETA's *Animal Times* magazine from 2001, "all they have to do is stop eating meat. That's the single most important thing you could do. It's staggering when you think about it. "Vegetarianism takes care of so many things in one shot: ecology, famine, cruelty. Let's do it! Linda was right. Going veggie is the single best idea for the new century."

Roberta Kalechofsky of Jews for Animal Rights similarly says: "Merely by ceasing to eat meat, merely by practicing restraint, we have the power to end a painful industry. We do not have to bear arms to end this evil. We do not have to contribute money, we do not have to sit in jail or go to meetings or demonstrations or engage in acts of civil disobedience. Most often, the act of repairing the world, of healing mortal wounds, is left to heroes and *tzaddikim* (holy people): saints and people of unusual discipline. But here is an action every mortal can perform--surely it is not too difficult!"

Reach the author at vasumurti@aim.com

Be informed!

Read the Valley Citizen at
<http://thevalleycitizen.com>

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**Commute Connection relaunches as Dibs to better engage the public****Organization calls out goal for one million Smart Travel miles logged by 2020**

The Commute Connection program of the San Joaquin, Stanislaus and Merced County transportation planning agencies announced that Commute Connection, a program to encourage people to find new ways to travel around or commute to work, has relaunched as Dibs. The Dibs program, designed to reduce traffic congestion and improve air quality in the three-county area, set an ambitious goal to have program participants log over a million Smart Travel miles by 2020.

"Our term for alternative transportation is 'Smart Travel'," said Kari McNickle, Program Specialist for Dibs. "We need more people to consider getting to work or getting around in vanpools, carpools, transit, trains, buses, biking and walking.

**Mentally ill**

... from page 1

mentally ill loved ones voluntarily seek help. The catch-22 is that a high percentage of mentally ill people think they are perfectly sane and consistently refuse help even in the form of medication.

The widespread need for Laura's Law almost never gets exposure except in cases of the death of a well-known or popular member of the community. Mentally ill homeless people routinely shuffle from the streets to jail and back again with virtually no publicity. And even Laura's Law is only a tiny step forward in understanding and reducing the harm of mental illness throughout our nation, but at least it's a step in the right direction.

Stanislaus County authorities are reviewing Laura's Law now and need to hear from citizens how important it can be in preventing the unspeakable tragedies that result from abandoning our mentally ill loved ones to the mercies of a legal system designed to handle criminals, not sick people.

Most Valley residents are only five minutes or fewer away from a mentally ill person desperately in need of help families, churches and charities can't provide. A great many of these sick people are homeless and therefore especially vulnerable. Modesto's tragic loss is also a nation's tragic loss and will never be mitigated until we stop criminalizing mental illness and recognize sick people need doctors and hospitals, not cops and jails.

<http://thevalleycitizen.com/mentally-ill-modestos-tragedy-is-a-nations-tragedy/>

Thousands of people in our three-county area are already using Smart Travel. We'd like to see this number increase dramatically and see more people claim 'dibs' on their Smart Travel options."

Through <https://www.dibsmysway.com/>, the public has access to a robust trip planning tool showing them a variety of options for getting from one place to another. By signing up to become a member of Dibs, they can participate in vanpool programs, carpool matching, Bike to Work Month activities and even get emergency rides home. Members can also win prizes and incentives for using Smart Travel options by recording their trips and miles through the Dibs website or mobile app.

"We have major challenges in the valley with so many people commuting long distances to work every day," McNickle explained. Dibs not only supports over 80,000 commuters travelling out of the area, but also the nearly 30,000 commuters travelling into the area for local employment. The easiest solution to our traffic problems is to encourage individuals to stop driving alone and switch to sharing rides when possible. Dibs can help people navigate the many different options, so they can find something convenient and practical."

"Just think how many cars and much time is wasted with commutes ranging from an hour to almost 2½ hours," added McNickle. "Those commuters using vanpools, carpools or commuter transit, can use that time more productively and avoid the hassle of driving all the time."

Dibs is not just for those traveling out of the three-county valley area either. McNickle and other Dibs team members are encouraging local workers and businesses to support Smart Travel through Bike to Work programs, walking to work, carpooling, vanpooling and transit options.

Dibs also partners with large and small employers to help spread the word and encourage employees to consider Smart Travel options. Employers have access to special features on the website to create custom worksite promotions and evaluate employee location clusters to identify ride matching and/or transit opportunities. Dibs is also instrumental in assisting employers subject to San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District Trip Reduction Rule 9410 mandate by providing a turn-key type of solution to assist with implementation and compliance.

"In order to be successful, Dibs also partners and collaborates with the Valley Air District, other transportation organizations and groups through the community, bike clubs and employer groups," said McNickle. "Our goal is to make Smart Travel easy for everyone."

Visit Info@DibsMyWay.com for more information. Contact: Kari McNickle, Kari@DibsMyWay.com, 209-235-0576; 1-800-527-4273.





Help keep our readers informed.
We urge people participating in an event
to write about it and send their story to
Connections.

Stockton

PEACE AND JUSTICE NETWORK OF SAN JOAQUIN COUNTY (<http://www.pjnsjc.org>). Info: James Walsh, jwprod1956@clearwire.net

APRIL

MJC Spring Science Colloquium, Science Community Center, Room 115, West Campus, 3 pm - 4 p.m. Contact: Teri Curtis (209) 575-6775 curtis@mjc.edu. 5: Teri Curtis, MJC Biology Professor, Success Stories from California's Channel Islands.

MJC Positive People Speaker Series: presentations by local community members who overcame challenges to achieve their goals. Thursdays, 6 pm. Mary Stuart Rogers Student Learning Center, West Campus, 2201 Blue Gum Ave., Modesto. Campus parking is \$2. Info: (209) 575-6700. **April 6**: The Honorable Rubén Villalobos, Stanislaus County Superior Court Judge.

Modesto Area Partners in Science (MAPS) free public programs. 7:30 p.m., MJC West Campus, Sierra Hall, Rm. 132. **April 7**: Dr. Amrith Gunasekera, Calif. Dept. of Food and Agriculture talks about the effects of climate change on agriculture (with a focus on California).

4 TUES: Film 1984. State Theatre, 1307 J. St., 7:00 pm. Visit <http://www.thestate.org/calendar/event/850>

5 WED: Modesto Peace/Life Center VIGIL: Living Wage. McHenry & J St., 4:30-5:30 pm.

6 THURS: MJC Civic Engagement Project: *Before the Flood* follows UN Peace Messenger Leonardo DiCaprio speaking with scientists, activists, and world leaders about climate change. How does climate change affect the environment? What can society do about it? 7-9 PM, MJC East Campus, Forum 110, 435 College Ave. Free.

15 SAT: Science on Screen: FREE science education series: *"Forensic Science In Crisis: How Proteins Can Help."* Brad Hart PhD, Deon Anex PhD, Katelyn Mason PhD-LLNL. Film, *Gattica* State Theatre, FREE. 2:30 pm. Visit <http://www.thestate.org/calendar/event/834>

16 SUN TUES: The Modesto Film Society presents *Witness*. State Theatre, 1307 J. St., 2:00 pm. Visit <http://www.thestate.org/calendar/event/729>

19 WED: Film Night at the Center: *Dogtown Redemption* 6:30 pm. at the Modesto Peace/Life Center, 720 13th St., Modesto. Discussion follows.

22-23: Artist Open Studio Tour: 36 locations in Stanislaus county, with 58 participating artists. Tour books available for \$10. Visit www.stanislausAOS.wordpress.com for information.

23 SUN: My Big Year: Photographing Birds in The Central Valley: A Birding Double Feature at the State Theatre. 2:00 pm, <http://www.thestate.org/calendar/event/853>

27 THURS: Film "Fun" Raiser for DKG Epsilon Nu Chapter. 5:30 pm doors open with Wine, Appetizers, and Raffle. Movie 7:00 pm. *SOME LIKE IT HOT*. State Theatre, 1307 J St., Modesto. Benefits: SCOE, MJC Scholarships, Library Books, Great Valley Museum. Donation: \$25.00. Tickets at the Door or email DKGMODESTO@gmail.com or contact Gloria, (209) 545-0883. <http://www.thestate.org/calendar/event/846>

29 SAT: Science on Screen: FREE science education series: *Behold Livormorium: A Quest for New Elements* Dawn Shaughnessy PhD-LLNL. Film, *Iron Man 2*. State Theatre, FREE. 2:30 pm. Visit <http://www.thestate.org/calendar/event/835>

29 SAT: People's Climate Movement Sister March. Merced Courthouse Park, W. 21st & M Sts., Merced. 1:00 pm. Contact Sharon, 209-813-4061; https://actionnetwork.org/events/peoples-climate-sister-march?source=direct_link&

LOOKING AHEAD

May 17: Film Night at the Center: *Modern Times*. 6:30 pm.

Sunday, June 4: Annual Modesto Peace/Life Center Pancake Breakfast, Modesto Church of the Brethren.

Friday-Sunday, June 23-25: Peace Camp in the Sierra, Camp Peaceful Pines, Clark Fork Rd. See article this issue.

REGULAR MEETINGS

SUNDAYS

Modesto Vineyard Christian Fellowship, 10:00 am at the MODSPOT, 1220 J St. Call or text 209-232-1932, email modestovineyard@gmail.com; All Welcome.

Weekly insight meditation and dharma talk, 9:00 am-10:15 am, 2172 Kiernan Ave., Modesto (in the UUFSC sanctuary). Info: Contact Lori, 209-343-2748 or see <https://imcv.org/> Email: insightmeditationcentralvalley@gmail.com

Food Addicts Anonymous In Recovery. Sundays 6:30 pm, 2467 Veneman Ave. Modesto. Info: Emily M., 209 480-8247.

MONDAYS

StanCounty Radical Mental Health: a peer facilitated support group open to people living with mental health issues. Mondays, 7 pm at the Modesto Peace/Life Center 720 13th St., Modesto. We strive to create a safe, non-judgmental space. Information: email stancountyrmh@gmail.com or contact Sue at 209-247-4659.

Walk With Me, a women's primary infertility support group and Bible study. 6:00 pm to 7:30 pm the first and third Mondays of each month (September only meeting 9/15/14 due to Labor Day). Big Valley Grace Community Church. Interested? Email WalkWithMeGroup@gmail.com or call 209.577.1604.

Silver & Gold Support Group 50+ years of age. Ongoing support group for mental health and wellness to meet the needs of the mature Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender (LGBT) community. Every Monday 3:00 - 4:00 pm, Community-Hope-Recovery, 305 Downey Ave. Modesto. Info: Monica O, Tiamonica64@gmail.com or Susan J, SusanthePoet@gmail.com

TUESDAYS

Exploring Whiteness & Showing Up For Racial Justice Meetings, Fourth Tuesday, monthly 7:00 p.m., Central Grace Hmong Alliance Church, 918 Sierra Dr., Modesto. Info: <https://www.facebook.com/events/247655549018387/>

Pagan Family Social, third Tuesdays, Golden Corral, 3737 McHenry Ave, Modesto, 6:00 pm. Info: 569-0816. All newcomers, pagan-curious and pagan-friendly welcome.

Ukulele class/play-a-long led by Lorrie Freitas 5 p.m.

MODESTO PEACE LIFE CENTER ACTIVITIES

Modesto Peace/Life Center VIGILS: held THE FIRST WEDNESDAY of the month at McHenry Ave. and J. St. (Five points), (NOTE TIME), 4:30-5:30 pm. Call the Center for info: 529-5750.

MEDIA: Listen to local Valley Community Radio KQRP 104.9 FM, <http://www.kqrp.com>

PEACE LIFE CENTER BOARD MEETING, FIRST Thursdays, 720 13th St., Modesto, 6:30 pm, 529-5750.

MEDIA COMMITTEE of Peace Life Center. Meetings TBA. Call John Lucas, 527-7634.

CONNECTIONS EDITORIAL MEETINGS: Info: 537-7818, jcostello@igc.org

PEACE/LIFE CENTER MODESTO, 720 13th St. Call 529-5750. We'll get back to you with current info on activities.

Beginners Lessons 6 p.m. Play Along in songbooks provided. Trinity Presbyterian Church, 1600 Carver, Modesto. Donation accepted. Info: 505-3216. www.funstrummers.com

Weekly insight meditation and dharma talk, 6:30 pm-8:30 pm, 2172 Kiernan Ave., Modesto (rear bldg. at the end of the UUFSC parking lot). Info: Contact Lori, 209-343-2748 or see <https://imcv.org/> Email: insightmeditationcentralvalley@gmail.com

Adult Children Of Alcoholics, Every Tuesday, 7 pm at 1320 L St., (Christ Unity Baptist Church). Info: Jeff, 527-2469.

WEDNESDAYS

Ongoing meditation class based on Qi Gong Principals. Practice a 3 Step Guided Meditation Process I have been doing for over a decade. Fun and Easy. JOIN ME! Donations accepted but optional. Call 209.495.6608 or email Orlando Arreygue, CMT RYT, orlando@arreygue.com

Merced LGBT Community Center offers a variety of monthly meetings and written materials. Volunteers, on site Wed-Fri, offer support. Ph: 209-626-5551. Email: mercedboard@gaycentralvalley.org - 1744 G St. Suite H, Merced, CA. www.mercedlgbtcenter.org

Merced Full Spectrum meets the second Wednesday of every month, 6 p.m. 1744 G St., Suite H, Merced <http://www.lgbtmerced.org/> Merced Full Spectrum is a division of Gay Central Valley, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. <http://www.gaycentralvalley.org/>

Unity Tai Ji Qi Gong (A Journey Within) - First United Methodist Church Multipurpose Rm - 6 pm - Wednesdays - freewill offering. Michele, 209 602-3162.

Modesto Folk Dancers All levels welcome. Raube Hall, Ceres (call for address), 480-0387.

GLBT Questioning Teen Support Group (14-19 years old). 2nd & 4th Wednesdays, College Ave. Congregational Church, 1341 College Ave., Modesto. 7 - 9 pm. Safe, friendly, confidential. This is a secular, non-religious group. Info: call 524-0983.

TRANSGENDER SUPPORT GROUP, 2nd & 4th Wed., 7:30 to 9 pm. Info: (209) 338-0855. Email info@stanpride.org , or tgsupport@stanpride.org

MINDFUL MEDITATION: Modesto Almond Blossom Sangha, 7 - 9 pm. Info: Anne, 521-6977.

COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS GROUPS, 2nd Wed., 252 Magnolia, Manteca.

THURSDAYS

LGBTQA Collaborative Meetings 4th Thursdays. Agendas are the same for each meeting. Lunch meeting: Peer Recovery Art Center, 1222 J St, Modesto, Noon to 1:30 pm. Dinner meetings: Stanislaus BHRS - Redwood Room, 800 Scenic Dr., Modesto, CA 95354, 5:30 pm to 7 pm. Meeting dates: Sept. 29, Oct. 27, Nov. 17, Dec. 15: No meeting/ Winter Mixer. Dedicated to promoting well-being in the LGBTQA community. John Aguirre, jpmadesto@gmail.com, 559-280-3864.

Green Team educational meetings the 3rd Thursday of each month, 10 to 11 am, Kirk Lindsey Center, 1020 10th St. Plaza, Suite 102, Modesto. www.StanislausGreenTeam.com

Third Thursday Art Walk, Downtown Modesto, downtown art galleries open - take a walk and check out the local art scene. 5-8 pm every third Thursday of the month. Info: 579-9913, <http://www.modestoartwalk.com>
A Buddhist Approach to Recovery from Addiction. Jana Lynn Community Rm., 500 N. 9th St., Modesto. Thursdays 6:30-8 pm. FREE (donations accepted). Info: email RefugeRecoveryModesto@gmail.com

The Book Group, First & third Thursdays. College Ave UCC Youth Bldg., Orangeburg & College Ave., 3:30 pm. Info: mzjurkovic@gmail.com

The Compassionate Friends, Modesto/Riverbank Area Chapter. 2nd Thursday of the month. Contact: Joanna Rose-Murray, 209-484-8276, jrmcompassionate@gmail.com, <http://www.tcfmodesto-riverbankarea.org>

NAACP. King-Kennedy Center, 601 S M.L. King Dr., Modesto, 7 pm, 3rd Thursdays. 549-1991.

Valley Heartland Zen Group: every Thurs 6:30 to 8:30 pm, Modesto Church of the Brethren, 2310 Woodland Ave. Meditation. Newcomers welcome. Info: 535-6750 or <http://emptynestzendo.org>

Pagan Community Meeting, 1st Thursdays, Cafe Amore, 3025 McHenry Ave, Suite S., Modesto, 8 pm. Info: 569-0816. All newcomers, pagan-curious and pagan-friendly welcome.

FRIDAYS

Funstrummer Ukulele Band every Friday, from 9:15 am until noon, Church of the Brethren, 2301 Woodland Ave., Modesto. Info: 505-3216; www.funstrummers.com

Latino Emergency Council (LEC) 3rd Fridays, 8:15 am, El Concilio, 1314 H St. Modesto. Info: Dale Butler, 522-8537.

VILLAGE DANCERS: Dances from Balkans, Europe, USA and more. Fridays, Carnegie Arts Center, 250 N. Broadway, Turlock. 7:30-9:30 pm, \$5 (students free). Info: call Judy, 209-480-0387.

SIERRA CLUB: Yokuts group. Regular meetings, third Friday, College Ave. Congregational Church, 7 pm. Info: 549-9155. Visit <http://www.sierraclub.org/mother-lode/yokuts> for info on hikes and events.

MUJERES LATINAS, last Friday, lunch meetings, Info: Cristina Villego, 549-1831.

HISPANIC LEADERSHIP COUNCIL, 1st & 3rd Fridays at 7:00 am, El Concilio, 1314 H St. Other meetings at Terrace Cafe, Double Tree Hotel. Info: Yamilet Valladolid, 523-2860.

SATURDAY

Citizens' Climate Lobby, Modesto Chapter, meets every first Saturday, 10:30 a.m., 937 Oxford Way, Modesto. Questions: Call Kathy, 523-5907.

So Easy ~ So Good: Vegetarian/Vegan/Wannabe Group. Potlucks, guest speakers, field trips, activist activities, movie nights, etc. Third Saturday of every month. Info: Kathy Haynes (209) 250-9961 or email kathyhaynesSESG@gmail.com

SERRV: Saturdays, 10 - Noon and after church Sundays or by appointment. Call Mary, 522-6497 or 523-5178. Gifts from developing countries. Church of the Brethren, 2301 Woodland, Rm. #4, Modesto. nonprofit organization. <http://www.gaycentralvalley.org/>

DEADLINE to submit articles to CONNECTIONS: Tenth of each month. Submit peace, justice, environmental event notices to Jim Costello, jcostello@igc.org Free Calendar listings subject to space and editing.